

# THE RELIGION OF A SENSIBLE AMERICAN

DAVID STARR JORDAN



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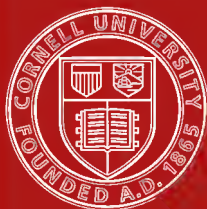
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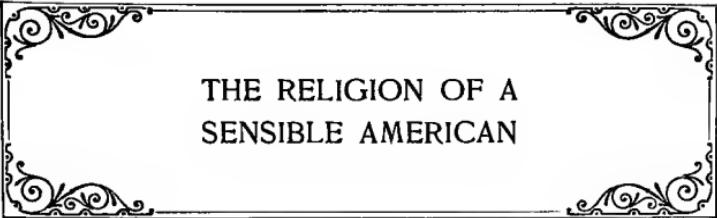
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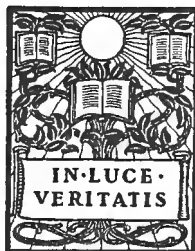


THE RELIGION  
OF A  
SENSIBLE AMERICAN

BY  
DAVID STARR JORDAN

*President of Leland Stanford Junior  
University*

"Believe and venture; as for  
pledges, the gods give none."



BOSTON  
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION  
1909



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A638173

The University Press, Cambridge, U. S. A.

TO THE MEMORY OF  
WILBUR WILSON THOBURN  
PROFESSOR OF BIONOMICS  
IN  
STANFORD UNIVERSITY  
BORN AT SINCLAIRSVILLE, OHIO  
JUNE 10, 1859  
DIED AT PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA  
JANUARY 6, 1899



## PREFATORY NOTE




THE writer of this little book was asked by the Editor of "The Hibbert Journal" to write an article on "the religion of a sensible American," to be the second of a series covering the religious experiences of "sensible" men of different nations, the first being "the religion of a sensible Scotsman." The title assigned seemed to shut out the possibility of a personal confession of faith, even were such a confession acceptable. For that reason and for other reasons the writer chose to set forth the religious belief and work of a friend, no longer living; one who could stand without question as a sensible man, and one whose thought and whose life were typical of the best which we may call American.

In reprinting this article as a booklet it has been somewhat extended in length by the inclusion of some matters omitted from the article as printed in "The Hibbert Journal."


D. S. J.



“UT of your lives  
take the love  
and sympathy,  
the purity, the  
truth, the ten-  
der things, and all that  
grows into the larger life.  
Put these on the cold altar  
of your heart. Cut out  
those lonely words, ‘To an  
unknown God,’ and write  
‘Our Father.’ Then bow  
before him. This is your  
God. He will not with-  
hold any good thing from  
you if you walk uprightly.”



## THE RELIGION OF A SENSIBLE AMERICAN

N these pages I have tried to set forth the religion of a wise man, forceful and helpful, whose religion justified itself by swaying the lives of many young men and women toward noble thoughts and sturdy righteousness.

My friend was a man whose religion appeared in deeds rather than in words, more in life than in precept. But the power of speech was his and in good measure, and his words were often in demand at gatherings of students. After his untimely death, various memoranda of his notes and talks to young people were saved and brought together by his associates. For these fragments, privately printed and nowhere for sale, we chose a title which tells the whole of his religion in four clear words, "In Terms of Life." From these notes and from my own recollections I venture to reconstruct the religion of a "sensible American," a religion which, however incomplete, is not far from the ideal toward which



the average sensible American of to-day is clearly tending.

In the use of the word "American," a term not of my own choosing, I do not wish to claim any special wisdom for the people of my own nation, or that their attitude toward religion is essentially different from that of men of other races. All people give their religious aspirations something of the color of their own individuality. An American is an Englishman who has had some additional experiences, whose ancestry has been judged and tested by influences other than those of the home country. In particular he has found himself in a motor environment, in a land of action, where no man can rest in the protection of privilege, and where the tradition of centuries counts for next to nothing. As a consequence, the American knows little and cares less for those things not inherently sacred, but which have become so in Europe through the accumulated tradition of religious association. He knows nothing of the ecclesiastical calendar. Thanksgiving, which is his own innovation, Christmas, and Easter constitute the only saints' days he remembers. He cares little for how things are done, his interest being in the fact that they are done. He is



likely to get at the heart of things in religion as in other matters, and may very likely offend good taste in doing so. Later he will be at leisure to consider the refinements of religious aspiration. At present he is prone to neglect them, and in the degree that religion appears to be bound up in niceties of expression, the average American is likely to be indifferent to it as no concern of his.

On the positive side the sensible American is sure that this is God's world, none other more so. "The God of things as they are" has his throne within the confines of his creation and no condition of life and no place or time can lie outside his presence. But whatever the extent of space and time, two things are real with us—Here and Now. This is our day, and here is the spot where our life must be made to count. In history other men have had their other days, but yesterday is already numbered with the rest of man's "seven thousand years," or his seventy million, it may be—who shall say? Yesterday has passed away and is as far beyond our reach as the days of Julius Cæsar. To-morrow is still unborn and may never belong to us. We have to-day, and no day was ever so inspiring, so glorious, so worship-



ful. For this is our time to act, the hour for us to play our part. Let the part be large or small, it is a part of action. It is for us to do our best, not our second best; to do it with good cheer and with perfect confidence that in God's economy no good life is ever wasted. "God's errands never fail." It is not for us to cringe or whine, nor need we cry for any special recompense for days of doubt or despair or discomfort. Our part is a part of love and helpfulness of love as translated into terms of helping our neighbor.

Lord, here am I, my three score years and ten  
All counted to the full. I have fought thy fight,  
Crossed thy dark valleys, scaled thy rock's harsh height,  
Borne all the burdens thou dost lay on men  
With hand unsparing, three score years and ten.  
Before thee now, I make my claim, O Lord,  
What shall I pray thee as a meet reward?

I ask for nothing! Let the balance fall!  
All that I am or know or may confess  
But swells the weight of mine indebtedness.  
Burden and sorrow are transfigured all;  
Thy hand's rude buffet turns to a caress;  
For Love, with all the rest, Thou gavest me here,  
And Love is Heaven's very atmosphere.  
Lo, I have dwelt with Thee, Lord; let me die:  
I could no more, through all eternity.

The positive phase of this religion is the feeling of being at home in God's universe.



This is no alien land. Our fathers were born here, and our fathers' fathers, and the same Hand has led them on from the primordial sandstones of Quebec to the foundations of our own republic. The pledge of the future is adequate. We are links in an eternal chain, and the little part assigned to us is the conquest of Here and Now. Wisdom, as I have often said, is knowing what one ought to do next; virtue is doing it; and religion is the feeling or attitude which braces us up to our duty when it is easier to stand aside or to let the part assigned to us slip by through default. This may not matter in the long run—the ages are patient and the evasion of man is no novelty; but it means everything in the make-up of our own conduct of life, and that is the whole thing with us. “Confessedly,” says Charles Ferguson, “this is a jangling world for one who is bent on quick pleasures; there may be rhythm and music in it for a lover who can wait.”

In the notes of my friend I find these words :  
“It is a great event in a boy's life when he can say, ‘I and my father are one.’ It is greater when a man finds that he can keep step with God; that he wants to do, and can do, the things that God is doing.



“When men search with so much heartache for faith in order that they may believe, they think they are groping in the darkness to find God. They think if they can only find him, they will get faith from him. It is not faith in God that they need, but faith in themselves. God will do his part. He will run the universe without falter. It is self-confidence that men need, belief that they can do their part. No man ever falls away from God and loses confidence in him until he has first warped and twisted his life by falling away from himself. Faith does not depend upon anything God does or may do in answer to our prayers, but upon us—upon our training, our experience, our knowledge.

“Faith in self—faith that links God and man and is the key to all the riches of heaven—is the result of experience and is to be won, like any other power, by persistent and constant exercise. You, and you alone, hold the key to your heaven. ‘There is,’ says Ferguson, ‘no blackboard demonstration that God is good. You must risk it or die a coward.’”

My friend used the word “God” freely in his talks to young men and women. With him God was not a mere abstraction, but a very



potent element in the trend of events, the great First Cause and the Last Cause of things as they are. His God was not anthropomorphic, not "made in the image of men," nor did he conceive his attributes in such fashion as to justify Haeckel's sneer at worship of "a gaseous vertebrate." It is only in mythology and poetry that God appears as angry, jealous, benevolent, a judge, a tyrant, a king, a huge hoary-bearded giant. The God of my friend's worship is an immanent god, "numen adest," in the fine words of Linnæus.<sup>1</sup> His will is that which is permanent in time and space, in a universe in which, using Huxley's words, "nothing endures save the flow of energy and the rational intelligence that pervades it." His is that rush of force; his is that rational intelligence. It is through him that right and justice are eternal.

The sensible American finds that good men through the ages have cherished an ideal of love and service, wavering at the best and often obscured by war and controversy, but tending toward the end of serving God

<sup>1</sup> It is said that on the doors of Linnæus' home at Hammarby, near Upsala, were these words: "Innocue vivito; numen adest." "Live blameless; God is here." "This," said Linnæus, "is the wisdom of my life."

through building up stronger, purer, happier units of humanity. He finds that this ideal and many others of like import, the dream of "lives made beautiful and sweet by self-devotion and by self-restraint," had their origin, or at least their first connected promulgation, in the words of Jesus the Jew. The records show that this young man, who "spake as never man spake," was born at Bethlehem in Judæa, nearly twenty centuries ago; that he taught among men and ministered unto men for a few years with a few disciples, and that he came to a cruel death. He finds that the teachings of Jesus are reported in fragments only, in a tongue not his own, and with many variants and some additions, but with their essential spirit strong and clear in every version of his language.

In reconstructing the life of Jesus, "we find," says Charles F. Dole, "a very remarkable torso, or at least the fragments of a statue. But a torso is definite and complete as far as it goes. Fragments and pieces are firm in your hands. You can match them together. You can reconstruct a torso. The fragments in our case crumble. They are mixed with other fragments. If they combine, they never form one and the same combination. You have not



one Jesus, but two or more with different elements."

As to what men say of Jesus, "their descriptions and paintings and panegyrics almost never appear like the genuine work of even tolerable copyists. There are second-hand artists who have at least seen original work. But the conventional descriptions of Jesus not only vary, they seem never to have been near an original. The more complete and entertaining they are, the nearer they come to be pure creations of the author's mind. They are German or Italian or English or American pictures, and generally somewhat modern—they are not Hebrew—whereas Jesus was a Jew of twenty centuries ago."

But the sensible American finds that these words, however fragmentary and at times even contradictory, nevertheless bear their own witness. All the wisdom of the wise ages as to the conduct of life cannot add much to them. All the history of human civilization is permeated with his doctrines. Even were every syllable he has spoken lost to-day, his teachings could be restored and retraced in the history of civilization; for they rise above everything else in history; above the pomp and splendor of empire, the hideous orgies of holy war, the



ferocity of religious persecution, and the bitterness of theological disputation.

The tested and co-ordinated results of human experience, which we call science and by which all theory must be judged, emphasize and verify these teachings in their relation to human conduct. As religion is the impulse to strive for the highest and best in human conduct, and as science furnishes our human test of what is best and highest, my friend finds no conflict between religion and science. If this is the age of science, it is largely so because it is the age of religion and in like degree. Between new ideas and preconceived ideas, between discovery and tradition, there is in the nature of things a constant struggle. This struggle must involve each individual man and each phase of human society. But in this struggle the truth is sure to survive at last, and the inevitable clash has in it no occasion for despair. Meanwhile the wisdom of the race is never in conflict with the worthiest ideals, the most repaying experiences in the conduct of life.

And he finds that the words of Jesus suffer nothing under any analysis he can give them. They have always been true, and they are part of the framework of creation, of which the



conduct of human life is the crowning feature, the most lofty, and at the same time the most imperfect, and for the same exalted reason. These words are true, he will say, not because Jesus said them. Jesus said them because they were true. And in this sense, his words, "I and my Father are one," have a definite and human meaning — a meaning not concerned with any mystery of the priest. In the same sense, all right thinking and all right acting are one — one with the Creator of man and with his purposes. It did not matter to my friend what other forms of oneness might exist so long as there was room for this divine and human unity in the life of every man.

For reasons like these my friend was not disposed to measure the relation to Divinity on the part of the Prophet of Nazareth. Whether Jesus be one with God, or one with man, or both, is, after all, not a vital question. This he may leave the theologian to settle, if he can, through tradition, text, or syllogism. It is enough for the sensible American to believe in the unity of the word and the spirit. The word is divine because it is true, and one name of Divinity is the Perfect Truth. In the religion of Jesus the end of truth is service,



and religion finds its function and justification in the conduct of life.

The sensible American notes a contrast between the subjects which aroused the interest of Jesus, as recorded by his disciples, and the subjects which have filled the history of the Christian Church. It is the contrast between the divine and the human in man's affairs. The simple life of the teacher who had no place to lay his head stands in contrast with the complex struggles of those who in his name established a holy empire. "In this sign conquer" was the symbol of domination. It was in every respect the antithesis of the words of Jesus, as the life of Constantine, maker of this phrase, stood at the opposite pole from the life of him who suffered under Pontius Pilate.

The historic Church has interested itself in war and conquest, in pomp and pageantry, in dominion over men and lands, in temporal rulership as well as spiritual control. None of these matters entered into the ambitions of Jesus. To him these were far-away affairs, evils to be endured, it may be, as the tribute money was rendered unto Cæsar, but forming no part of the ideals of rational religious life.

The historic Church has, almost from the first, been entangled in a warfare of creeds. The creed as we know it to-day is a historic battle-cry of a contending host. It belongs to the war of words which succeeded the clash of spears and lances. To the sensible American the creeds are mostly harmless. They will not injure us if we do not read them. Without their historic background we can hardly understand them. They should be left in this background. It is not well to revise them too often. Their galvanized life may work injury to our spirits. "Creeds are not true," Mr. G. L. Dickinson tells us; "they are merely necessary." "Since I read the Apostles' Creed," says Mr. Dooley, "it seems less convincing than when I heard it and did not understand it." As Dr. Holmes once said, "Old errors do not die because they are refuted; they fade out because they are neglected." Their place is in psychology and history, not in the religion of Jesus. To believe is surely adequate. We need not go into particulars. To believe is to have faith in the universe, in man, and in all the forces inside or outside ourselves which shall make for righteousness. "Believe and venture." This is our part. "As for pledges, the gods give none."



As his religion is not regulated by intellectual assent to any proposition in metaphysics, spiritual or biographical, the average sensible American is not alarmed over the results of the Higher Criticism. Enough that is genuine and beyond question goes back to the teachings of Jesus. That devout enthusiasts have interpolated here and there an illustration, a bit of philosophy, or a bit of imagination, or that chapter or epistle may have been attributed to the wrong authority does not disturb his spiritual consciousness. These matters are interesting from the scientific side. They are inspiring to students of records and manuscripts, but they do not touch bottom in their relation to religion. Neither is he concerned because wine is not turned into water in our day, nor in any other day, not even by the faith that moves mountains. The old story of Cana may not be true. It may be poetry, or parable, or error of record, or even pure falsehood. That he reads this tale does not help his faith, but it does not disturb it. In the face of the greatest marvel in human history, the teachings of him who spake as never man spake, of him who will draw all men to him, he will leave to each expert in Oriental imagery such theory of physical miracle as may seem to him



best. He can understand that the parables and fancies of Hebrew poets, like those of English poets, interpret spiritual rather than literal or historical fact. He knows the distressing inadequacy of any poem when all its expressions are literally interpreted. Therefore he is not distressed over the narrowness of the whale's gullet, nor over the maladjustment of the days of creation, nor the fact that the prayers of good men will not wring rain from a steel blue Australian sky. Neither is his faith impaired by the certainty that creation was a process very different from that which our fathers imagined—even the creation of man. He recognizes clearly enough that the ancestry of man runs close to that of the animals which are likest him, and in whose image, anatomically, he is made. He rejoices, rather, that the world is far older and the universe far broader than his fathers had thought; that "Time is as long as space is wide." Infinite detail of preparation, even in the processes of creation, seems to guarantee ineffable achievement. The heavens declare the glory of God only the more insistently, now he has learned what his fathers could not know, — how vast the range of all these heavens must be. As he who believes "by the grace of Jupiter, the highest god, may



despise all the lesser gods in silence," so he whose spirit is filled with the greater faith must turn away from all the lesser mysteries and marvels.

As with the phases of belief, so with the symbolism in which they find expression. "Do this in memory of me" was a simple and natural ceremony so long as it bore witness to the living reality in the hearts of men. But when the Eucharist became the signal of wordy or even bloody warfare, Homoiousian versus Homooousian, it is no longer a pledge of his memory. It is a weapon in the hands of ambition. Though among simple folk it holds its primal associations, its meaning is forgotten in the seats of the mighty. The baptism in the Jordan had a significance with a clear river in a dusty land that may be lost in costly covered fonts or cruelly burlesqued by holes cut through the winter ice. The Sabbath exists for man, not man for the Sabbath. It is neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem that men are to worship. They are to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth.

It is clear to the sensible American that the religion of Jesus has no necessary connection with church or state. A church or state may be permeated with its spirit, but religion is not



dependent on organization. It has no necessary connection with creed or ceremony, with litany or liturgy, with priest or preacher, with symbol or miracle, with sacrament or baptism, with pious action or with pious refraining. These have been associates of religion: sometimes religion has been helped by them; but the reality lies with the individual man, his relation to his fellows and to his individual duty.

My friend tells this parable:

"In the old days a father built a home for his family. It was complete in every part, but the altar around which they gathered in prayer was not yet set in place. The mother wished it in the kitchen: there she was perplexed with her many cares. The father wished it in his study: God seemed nearer to him among his books. The son wished it in the room where guests were received, that the stranger entering might see that they worshiped God. At last they agreed to leave the matter to the youngest, who was a little child. Now the altar was a shaft of polished wood, very fragrant, and the child, who loved most of all to sit before the great fire and see beautiful forms in the flames, said, 'See, the fire log is gone; put the altar there.' So because one would not



yield to the other, they obeyed, and the altar was consumed, while its sweet odors filled the whole house — the kitchen, the study, and the guest hall — and the child saw beautiful forms in the flames.” Doubtless the others came to see them also, as the non-essentials passed out of their religious life.

“Many fathers and mothers say to me,” continues my friend, who was a teacher of science in an American college, “‘If my boy will only hold on to the fundamentals.’ They are afraid that the business of the university is to overthrow fundamentals. As if fundamentals could be overthrown! What they mean by fundamentals is their own conception of the truth, the basis of their own belief. They want their boys to wear their clothes — not the same style of garments, but the identical clothes — with all the creases and wrinkles and patches in place. Now, the wrinkles and creases represent experience and testing, and the patches are the scars — honorable scars of victory. And I have no patience with the sophomoric spirit which vaunts its reason and throws into the rag-bag everything that the fathers believed. We should not be here to-day if our fathers had not believed very close to the truth. However far afield we may go



in our young and callow days, most of us will be found revamping the old beliefs of our fathers and mothers when we go to work in the world. Eighty-five per cent of our students take up their old practices again when their real living finds expression. A little bit of real living brings back the enthusiasm and the emotion, and no one can be faithful and true to his ideals without finding God displacing them with himself.

“Calvinism and Arminianism are trifling matters compared with the fact that God is and that we may call Him our Father. Unitarianism, Trinitarianism, are mere word quibbles compared with the fact that the spirit of Jesus is in the world, saving it. These things are not fundamentals. They are only terms, forged by human intellects to express one phase of the truth as it appeared to them. Jesus cared for none of these things except as they hampered and hindered those who believed them instead of believing him; who worshiped them instead of using them to serve their neighbors.

“The time comes more than once in a man’s life when he must know what he believes; when the truth that is in his own heart is all that he can find. But no truth is ours until



we first live it; until it enters into our lives and we become it."

In a high sense no man can accept or embrace the religion of another. It must become his own first, or else he cannot receive it. If he takes it from another without change it is not a religion; it is some statement of opinion, some type of ceremonial, or some collection of words, from which the life has long since faded away. Or, in a larger way, it means that he becomes a member of a historic association for the sake of participating in its benefits, or, better, for the purpose of sharing its efforts for the advancement of humanity. From his notes on a talk before a Bible Class I take these words:

"If Jesus is an important factor in our social life, why should we not study him as we study Shakespeare, or Luther, or Cæsar, and in exactly the same spirit? If Christianity summarizes the great forces which control and direct and shape our civilization, why, then, should we not study it as we would the French Revolution, and in exactly the same spirit?

"In studying the person of Jesus, his biography and his character, we must do it in human terms. That is not saying that there are no other terms. Our object is to empha-



size the humanity of Jesus. There is a theology of Christ; its study belongs to metaphysics. There is a psychology of Christ; its study belongs in its particular place. Our study is to show the strong and pure, the successful, the virile nature, the picture of whose life makes every true man stand taller and every weak heart stronger.

"It is a fact that no man can ever stand true under the severest tests of life without increasing the self-respect of every other man who knows it. I never hear or see such instances without feeling proud that the human race can commit such virtue. So, setting aside all doctrines about Christ's nature and office, not for the reason that we do not hold them, but because they are not for us just now, we will use this wonderfully simple and natural teacher's life as a key to solve the mysteries of our own lives.

"A violet looking at the sun can know only its violet rays. Its knowledge fades on the one hand into actinic darkness; on the other it is lost in the blues. Its knowledge of the great sun is limited by the work the sun has done in it, by its coincidence with the sun.

"So with any ideal, with any friend. Friendship is but the common ground you and another



occupy. Your best friend is he who widens this common ground and quickens your whole being, the one who makes you live the most. You do not measure your friendships by your brains, but by your pulse beats.

“Some of you say that you cannot reconcile your intellectual and your spiritual lives. I think you never will, if by reconcile you mean coincide. The head can never understand the heart, and the heart will always be doing such unreasonable things. But if the head is right in its sphere, it will find that the heart in its sphere is right also.

“Jesus talked in the language and figures of the everyday life of his time. To the people who listened he was not using the language of the temple, but of the street, of the field, of the lake-shore. He talked to be understood by people whom he understood. We can only comprehend his meaning by understanding the conditions of the time, the people, the figures of speech, the changes that have come to the words he used.

“The words of Jesus were not religious in his day any more or less than a lecture in hygiene is to-day. We expect to hear them in church or connect them with religion, but they were not such words as his audiences



were accustomed to hear in the synagogues. They have become so largely the ecclesiastical language of our time that it is hard for us to realize that they were not ecclesiastical then. 'He taught not as the scribes taught.' We can only get the meaning of these words by taking from them the ecclesiastical setting and expressing them in our own phraseology."

In my friend's notes I find these words also:

"'I am the Way.' Jesus is speaking — speaking of himself. A quick way to know a man is to watch him when he is speaking about himself. Some cannot speak respectfully of themselves. Others talk *themselves* to those who have ears to hear. Listen to these; they are like children, and deal with the truth.

"Jesus often speaks of himself. No other religious teacher does so much of it. And yet one always feels that his thoughts are not with himself, but with those to whom he is giving himself helpfully. No one could call Jesus an egotist. There are teachers who have wonderful power in selecting beautiful thoughts and pictures out of the records of the past and passing them on to others. They have an instinct for ideals, and they build Utopias of them that make this dusty world seem uncomfortable, and their intoxicated followers never



get a sober view of life without turning pessimists.

“Again, there are teachers who talk about life and what they get out of it; who exhibit the handful of nuggets they have dug and tell where they found them. And as we listen we are aroused to dig, too. Their hopeful and successful lives quicken ours. Jesus belonged to this second class. There is a peculiar power in his ‘I say unto you.’ One feels that he has lived his words and that they can be lived. Solomon holds up ideals and precepts, but does not live them. And every view of Solomon we get through his words shows a pessimist whom life has soured. We feel like saying, ‘Solomon, take your own medicine’; ‘Physician, heal thyself.’ The ideal of Jesus is himself, and because he was so much of a man and dealt so much with commonplace things, we feel that we can do as he did.

“Precepts and rules of life and high ideals are useful as they mold and shape us while we behold them. They are food for action. They are not guides to life. Habits are guides to living, and habits are formed by doing. One cannot stop at every crossroad to consult a notebook for the proper precept. Men are neither trained nor saved by being preached



at. They seem to enjoy it, and often pay liberally for a weekly exhibition of beautiful ideals and well worded proverbs. These delight and amuse them, as the bottles on the druggists' shelves amuse a child, but they make wry faces if asked to taste them.

"A patriarch, a preacher, who is surrounded by a family of men and women, said: 'I never tried to talk religion to my children but once. I got my little girl, one Sunday afternoon, and preached at her. Next week I said, "Come, let papa talk to you." She said, "All right, papa; but please do not talk as you did last Sunday."' "

"Far more reaching than a father's words — and fathers are apt to be popes in their families — is a father's life; and a mother is not a collection of fine sayings, but an eternal influence of finer acts. I have heard more than one mother mourn because she could not say the right thing, she who was all the time an incarnation, in her world of boys and girls, of the living God. Men and women are molded by the silent, constant influence of a home far more than by the daily scolding and advising. Morning prayers are a poor substitute for a day of religion. A home saturated with peace and purity is the larger part of the



training of every child. Schools and universities are extras to be added later."

Another fragment is this :

"One day, when Jesus was talking about God to his disciples, Philip interrupted him by asking, 'Lord, show us the Father and we will be satisfied.' And Jesus said to Philip, 'Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me? The Father and I are so mixed, so amalgamated, that my loving is his loving; my goodness, his goodness; my wisdom, his wisdom. I am in the Father and the Father in me, and all these works that I am doing, we — the Father and I — are doing. The words I speak and the works I do are his works and words.'

"This was the Master's way of quieting Philip's fears that he could not get near enough to God to feel at home with him. Jesus was conscious of God. He never defined him. He never sought to prove his existence or establish any doctrines about him. He assumed God, and talked about him as naturally as a boy talks about his father. When he was going about doing good, he unquestionably recognized that God was doing the same; so they worked together. I have noticed that a boy who occasionally takes



hold and helps me in something I am doing does not first ask for proof that I am his father, nor does he insist that some one point out the family likeness. He just takes hold and helps, or imagines he helps, and links himself to me by talking a great deal about our work and what we are doing. He just assumes that I am, and that our life is one, as it is. This is the way that Jesus acts. When he is working, he expects God to co-operate, and he does. When he is in trouble, he cries out for help, and it comes. When he is anxious about leaving the crude and unripe disciples alone in the world, he talks the whole situation over with his Father as naturally as if they were sitting together in the firelight before some family hearth stone. This wonderfully successful and ideal life that Jesus led received its whole explanation and impetus from this relationship between him and his God. We cannot read about it or study his life without believing that the relationship was real. Whether God did his part or not, we cannot escape the conclusion that Jesus lived and loved and served and died as he did because of his conviction that he and his Father were one, — one in spirit, in aim, in purpose. And when we think of



the stupendous miracle of Christianity, when we see his principles abiding, his life and spirit going into all the corners of the world, we must believe that God was with him, and he knew it. It is that which 'works,' which stands the tests of time and place, which has God with it; and the everlasting life of Jesus is the strongest proof we could have that his method of conscious participation with God's life is the true way of living.

"Let me choose out of your lives some of the real things, and ask you to interpret them. Let us consider love. I choose this because the deepest, tenderest experiences of life are associated with it. The best things that have come to you have been brought by love, and you recognize yourself at your best when you are loving. Do you remember some time when you were in trouble, when perhaps you went near to the brink of the valley of shadows, when your arm needed strength and your heart sympathy? And do you remember how they came? How strong hands gripped yours, how hearty words of cheer drove out your loneliness, how little acts multiplied, until you were surrounded by loving-kindness and tender mercies? We call this friendship. It is God abroad in his world. He that hath



seen a friend hath seen God also. Do you remember those broken days of childhood, when [you in many moods mixed good and bad in the mosaic of your growing life? When you were thoughtless, there was one who never forgot; when you were wrong, there was one who was always kind; when you were in tears, there was one who wept with you; when you rejoiced, there was one who was glad. You call this sacred friend 'Mother.' Is it possible that any of you have known a mother's love and yet know not God? He that hath seen a mother hath seen God also."

In our curious little Anglo-Saxon fashion, every man in America, as in Great Britain, is ticketed as of some political and of some religious organization. It matters not how persistently he may scratch the party ticket, he is still numbered with the party, and in some states he is required annually to confess his faith, or else not to vote at the primaries. It matters not how consistently he may evade the means of salvation provided by his church, he can never quite outgrow the mark of its primitive label. All this is a result of heredity, a species of inherited knighthood through which we as Anglo-Saxons, and mostly in no



other sense, join with the Shintoists in the worship of ancestors. "So live that men by your good deeds may know your ancestors" is a Shinto maxim. This we have changed to read: "Know the religion and politics of your ancestors by your nominal affiliations."

In this fantastic Anglo-Saxon fashion my friend was ticketed as a Republican and a Methodist. The first need not concern us save that the name once stood for opposition to human slavery. As for the other, it was with him a name sacred to a mother's affection, and as available as any other form of religion as the backbone of a wholesome human life. But the desire to bring others into the hereditary fold did not exist with my friend. If he were told that a hundred men had joined the Methodist Church, coming over from the Presbyterians, the Baptists, or the Catholics, it would have interested him no more than to be told that a hundred fine sheep had been driven across from Santa Cruz County into Santa Clara. If the hundred men had been reclaimed from a life of indifference to the ideals of any of these churches, it would have been a matter for him to consider, especially if their faith bore fruitage in works.



The size of an ecclesiastical organization was to him a matter of no real importance. If its numbers increase, probably its ministrations serve the needs of the many. If the group persists, the reason may be that it meets more specialized needs. But in any event the question of numbers was one of no import to my friend, and he would be equally unmoved before the arguments derived from apostolic succession, from the significance of a Greek verb, or from the dictum of an infallible council. For it is only the truth which makes free, and the truth which was once hidden from the prophets is now sometimes at least revealed unto babes. There was to him no outside authority as to truth and practice, only the sanction which one sane action yields to the next. Nothing that is helpful to man can be displeasing to God. Neither can man "serve God with a lie." And his sincerity led my friend to look sometimes with overmuch distrust on the amenities of religious service. The austere Puritan mind is doubtful of the concourse of sweet sounds. It does not naturally worship its God in methods which appeal first of all to the eye and ear. Noble music yields sensuous pleasure rather than an impulse to move things



and to change customs. Beauty of form or tone has little to do with the impulse to action. The noblest paintings in the world were given to adorn a house of worship. The finest music has the same inspiration. "The groves were God's first temples," not unadorned, but beautiful in an austere fashion, their beauty not at the easy access of those who dwell in kings' houses. But our Puritan ancestors distrusted even this. Because of the riotous scarlet of the autumn woods of Massachusetts, according to Thoreau, these people on the hills "built meeting-houses and fenced them around with horse-sheds."

It is not necessary to lay too much stress on these matters. Our fathers were iconoclasts and destroyed some images of beauty with the clay gods they hated. But my friend had a tolerance too broad to be a foe to beauty. It was to him not the first element in religion, nor the second, nor the third, but as an expression of harmony in human life, a factor to be reckoned with and not despised. But he needed no ritual. The direct expression of individual feeling, however crude, has in it something that transcends perfection. The Oxford movement towards perfect expression would doubtless have seemed to him a move-



ment away from something to express. Broad Church he was and Low Church, and broad and low in this technical sense the American in his religious ceremonials is likely ever to be. We may not claim this as a merit; it may even be a fault: but in any case it is a natural fault of democracy, and it is from the open level of democracy that greatness is surest to arise. For greatness never asks itself, What is the proper way to do this? How was it done by those who did it last? How should I comport myself to fall into the apostolic succession?

The gift of song was denied to my friend. I know of but a single case in which he expressed his thoughts in verse, but this verse is worth saving for the practical religion which is expressed in it.

Oft in the dusty course it seems  
The face of him I am to meet  
Is dimmed before my straining eyes;  
And silence answers to my cries —  
Silence and doubt my questions greet.

Yet, pressing onward to my goal,  
Some breeze will blow the dust apart.  
'T is dust my feet have raised that hides  
The Father's smile that e'er abides.  
The dust has changed, but not his Heart.



The silence is my ignorance  
When reason seeks him to define.  
Life's mysteries are solved by life,  
And doubts that rise in anxious strife  
Before the Love of God decline.

We seek in wordy phrase to paint  
The Unknown God to finite eyes.  
Our logic kills our charity,  
Our wisdom widens mystery,  
Our altars bear no sacrifice.

Yet to the listening ear God speaks  
In myriad tongues on sea and shore,  
In childish prattle, mothers' songs,  
When prophets cry against men's wrongs,  
Or love knocks at some prison door.

Faith born of love and fed by hope  
Sees God where reason's eye is dim,  
And reason led by faith will prove  
So strong that doubts can never move,  
Nor clouds disturb our trust in him.

Then courage, fainting one, take heart;  
Thy God in clouds hides not his face,  
The veil is thine, thine is the fear,  
Withhold thy cries, list to his cheer,  
And onward press, fed by his grace.

The religion of Jesus has no necessary connection with any Church. But the need of democracy to-day does not lie in the direction of minimizing the work or influence of the Church, nor of the churches, if we regard



the individual groups as distinguished from the operations of the whole.

For the Church is a natural adjustment of the desire to hold whatever of spiritual good the best of men have attained. In the words of Dr. Joseph H. Crooker, "The world needs an institution organized by his spirit and filled with his influence, that men may be instructed in his gospel and trained to citizenship in the kingdom of love which he inaugurated. The necessity is not that we should have slavish disciples, blind followers or mere imitators of Jesus. A special institution is surely needed to provide a method by which his personal impulse may be brought to bear on human souls, and by which human beings may be trained to service under the authority of an equal love. The Church administers life to those in need because it is the servant of one whose heart abounded in love. The love which his heart felt and the love which our hearts need is the measure of what the Church is worth to humanity."

A bit of wisdom is this, the last lines from my friend's pencil and never finished.

"A very large part of the intellectual class finds itself to-day between the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand, the mind is



dominated by inheritance and training until it identifies religion with its institutions, its dogmas, its forms, its figures of speech; on the other, this mind is trained by the methods and literature of the age to war with the institutions of religion, to ignore her forms and reject her dogmas.

“By this dilemma one who would be religious is tempted to separate his religion from his intellectual life to the great disturbance of the former, or to close his eyes to what they see and distrust reason and experience so far as they lead him away from his faith. This is a form of intellectual dishonesty not so common now as a few years ago. By this same dilemma one who would be rational is tempted to hoodwink himself by imagining that he believes what he knows he doubts, or to classify himself as unreligious altogether because he is not like some people who say they believe what he must doubt, and who loudly affirm their own religion. The dilemma is not a new one, but to those whose expanding intellectual life leads them to it for the first time it is new and very real. Of these there are many in our midst.

“I believe that every man can and ought to be religious. I do not think he is a complete



man until he is religious. If you will accept my definition of religion, you will think so too. I cannot make you religious. I would not if I could. That is your part. Being is not born of hearing, but of doing. But I have learned some things in my experience with young men and women that have been very helpful to me and to others to whom I have given them. Some of these things I bring to you, hoping they may be needed. I like to bring to you the best my life gives me, and the best thing out of my experience is that the life that Jesus lived is the best life for any man or woman. People do not readily believe this. When we remember how quickly men throw away old things for newer and better, how rapidly new inventions are adopted the world over, we can but wonder that the best life has so slowly commended itself to the race. But I think we are beginning to see that the world has had but imperfect and few glimpses of the real life of Jesus. An artificial, man-made Jesus, constructed of Greek philosophy, Oriental mysticism, and Roman legalism, has grown up between the real Jesus and a harassed people who yet instinctively feel that there is a living being within the mass of stuff associated with his name.



“With most people to-day the terms Christianity and Religion are synonymous. Even the Jew of to-day will speak of the civilization which he himself has so well helped to build as a Christian civilization. The adjective Christian and the term Christianity are used to designate and define that movement which, wider than any church, broader than any creed, has carried our moral and social and intellectual life far in advance of that of any other age. Even men who would rather believe like Buddha or Confucius prefer to live like Christians. Christianity is one of the very few universal things in the world to-day, until we seek to define it—then Babel ensues. Now the reason for this confusion and lack of agreement is the fact that men do not base their definitions upon the reality, but upon deductions and doctrines which from their very nature can never be tested by experience.

“This confusion of tongues has turned many true men and women away from Christianity. Go to them and say, in Jesus’ name, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you are a Christian,’ and they will answer, ‘I never was baptized, never joined the church, never recited the creed, and never said, Lord, Lord.’ Then you may answer, ‘But I was hungry,

and ye gave me meat. I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink. I was a stranger (homesick and lonely), and ye took me into your home. I was naked, and ye clothed me. I was sick, and ye visited me. I was in prison, and ye came unto me.' This kingdom is made of such as these. If we would use Jesus' test of a Christian and separate the men-serving sheep from the do-nothing goats, there are not enough churches in this world to house the host of Christians, not even allowing for the church space that the goats would have to vacate.

"It is pathetic to see how the world is struggling toward the Christian ideals almost in spite of the great institutions which have so long stood as the representatives of Christ. The pulpit no longer has a monopoly in proclaiming the truth. The truest religious life finds expression now in a thousand ways that have not yet been adopted by any institution.

"For the Church this means that it loses that great body of true and earnest men who do not recognize their ideal of humanity in it. But for many of these true and earnest men, lovers of their fellows, it means that they classify themselves as heretics and outcasts and unreligious. This in itself does not make



them so except so far as a man unconsciously lives up to the reputation he makes for himself. Custom has so identified religion with its institutions in our minds that it is difficult to think of one without the other. It is a sign of vitality when a man inside of a church or outside recognizes his religion as his life, independent of any means of expression. The commendation 'Well done' will give certain self-approval to any one who faithfully works with the trend of things, but it will come sooner if he knows he has a right to expect it. Many people come to know Jesus by their righteous lives who would never know him through what often seems to them the fantastic and irrational processes of Christian institutions. Kindness and sympathy and mercy and love are eternal graces and know their kind wherever found, and are known by them.

"But must I not believe this or that about God or Jesus before I am religious? Most certainly not; only so much as finds response in your own life. It is only that part of God or Jesus that we can appropriate, assimilate, and recognize as possible and attainable in our own lives that is of any use to us.

"Oh that religion might be put upon a more natural and commonplace basis! So much of



the supernatural as is not founded on our daily experiences or suggested by our living might be removed.

“The instinct of worship is indestructible in man’s nature. Religion is the activity of our sympathies, the feeding of our hopes, the strengthening of our knowledge of the trend of things. Men worship best together, but they philosophize best alone. But you say, ‘If I believe a part of Jesus’ life, must not I believe it all?’ No. Your life is founded upon so much of truth as you apprehend; the rest is mystery to you, and whatever your attitude toward it, you do not keep it to live with.”

The historic church, whatever may be our view of the infallibility of its guiding spirit, has never been infallible in the details of its deeds. Its outlying labors are the works of men with all the faults of men, cruelty, carelessness, injustice, and prejudice to which men and groups of men are prone. It is easy enough to find in the same church, in any church at any time, almost every extreme in the range of human character or action, whether individual or collective. St. Vincent de Paul and the Duke of Alva were not far apart in the church relations. The same



church, any church, to-day is the shelter of the clerical renegade or the commercial bandit as well as the hard-working saint.

"The Defenders of the Faith," says Charles Ferguson, "have made it hard to believe. . . . The cruelest men have been makers of empires, as Napoleon and Philip II, excepting only the makers of churches, as Torquemada and Calvin. God will have sons. And the twentieth century belongs neither to the priests nor to the politicians."

Large or small, time-honored or temporary, each organization of men must justify itself by its influence on human life. There are no chosen people save those who have chosen themselves. The "God of things as they are" recognizes no "privileged corporations," and with him "the traditions of a thousand years are but as the hearsay of yesterday."

This allegory is from the pen of William Lowe Bryan:

"In London I saw two pictures. One was of a woman. You would not mistake it for any of the Greek goddesses. It had a splendor and majesty such as Phidias might have given to a woman Jupiter. But not terrible. The culmination of the awful beauty was in an expression of matchless compassion. If there



had been other figures they must have been suffering humanity at her feet.

"The other was also of a woman. Whose face it is hard to say. Not the Furies, not Lady Macbeth, not Catherine de Medici, not Philip the Second, not Nero, not any face you have ever seen, but a gathering up from all the faces you have seen—the greatness, the splendor, the savagery, the greed, the pride, the hate, the mercilessness, into one colossal, terrifyingly Satanic woman face. The first was clothed in simple, soft, white robe; the other in a befitting tragic splendor, mostly blood-red. I looked from one to the other. What immeasurable distance between them! What single point have they in common? But as I look back and forth I seem to see a certain similarity. It grows upon me. I am credulous. I am appalled. Then one touches me and whispers: 'They are the same. It is the Church.' In London I saw this—in the air."

These same two pictures, the red Church and the white, I saw myself not many years ago, the one at Rotterdam, the other in the Pennine Alps. At the corner of the market place at Rotterdam there stood, for three hundred years, a tall house which bore over its door this



inscription: IN DUIZEND VREEZEN, "In a thousand terrors." In the last decade, which has swept away historic Rotterdam, leaving a new, clean, and quite uninteresting city, this house has been torn down. But for a long time it stood as a memory of the bitterness of religious conflict. When the Spanish troops ravaged the Netherlands, a band of Dutch Protestants gathered in this house. They killed a number of goats, piled them up behind the door, which they left ajar, while the blood of the beasts flowed out over the lintels. When the Spanish troops came to this door they saw the blood and felt their carcasses as they pushed against the door. Then they passed by, for it seemed that in this house all deeds of murder were already accomplished. Inside the people passed the night in a thousand terrors, and later it became a historic monument, with its pointed gables, sagging roof, and little round windows as if made of the bottoms of bottles, and the name of the house was IN DUIZEND VREEZEN.

This was the red work of the red Church. There is the white one also, and the two are one and the same. The long road from Aosta in Italy, by Saint Rémy, to Martigny in Switzerland, leads over the high mountain pass



where a thousand years ago the Saracen brigands held sway and made human sacrifices in the worship of "Jupiter Pen." Here in those days the young priest, Bernard de Menthon, whom they now call Saint, drove out the brigands, destroyed the statue of Jupiter, and set in its place the hospice which we now call the Great Saint Bernard. This hospice stands in a mountain pass of the sternest kind, the center of rain and wind in the summer, of whirling storms of snow and blasts of boundless violence all through the ice-bound winter. The peasants of that region are forced to cross this pass in the rounds of their migratory labors, and it is the work of monks and dogs of St. Bernard to make this journey possible.

Soon after leaving Rotterdam I crossed this pass on an August day, but in the face of a suffocating storm. Many travelers came over the mountain that day. Among them were a man and his wife, Italian peasants who had been over the mountains to spend a day or two with friends in some village on the Swiss side, and were now returning home. Man and woman were dressed in their peasants' best, and with them was a little girl, some four years old. The child carried a toy horse



in her hands, the gift of some friend below. As they toiled up the steep path in the blinding snow, all of them thinly clad and dressed only for summer, they were chilled through and through, while the child was almost frozen. The monks came out to meet them, took the child in their arms, and brought her and her parents to the fire, covered her shoulders with a warm shawl, touched the toy horse gently, as though it were a holy image, and sent them down the mountain to their home in the valley, warmed and filled.

This was a simple act, of course, an act of every day, a duty of the outlying fringe of the white Church, which cares for the sick and the poor. But red Church and white Church, in all their ramifications, each is a necessary part in the struggle of humanity to actualize the teachings of Jesus.

The religious philosophy of the active American tends unconsciously toward testing all truth by its availability for action. Each doctrine must work itself out in terms of life. The test of truth is this: Can we trust our lives to it? If we trust in any way, in the long run it is our life which we risk. Whatever will work in the conduct of life strengthening it, enriching it, giving it a higher trend, must, so far as



it goes, have elements of truth. If it were not true it would not work. It would not long continue even to seem to work. But these human theories or conceptions are never simple or pure. Error is always mixed with the truth, and error is not livable. It cannot be wrought into the elements of sound and wholesome life. Wrong belief is more dangerous than incomplete belief, for all truth stated in human terms must be left incomplete. We can never finish the equation. That a form of religion favors sobriety, develops charity, and yields consolation in time of trouble proves that there is truth in it. But it does not prove that it is all true, or that any of its distinctive characters are true, or that truth or even virtue animated its founders. It is the business of science and of philosophy, which is the logic of science, to purify these concepts, to separate from the mass those elements on which the conduct of life may rest.

"We will tread the floors of hell if need be," says Dr. William M. Salter, "rather than hocus-pocus ourselves into believing it is heaven. We will face reality and by long facing it, and above all working in it, we may, under the surface and the scum, detect traces of heaven in it; not traces that *we put* there,



God forbid, but that are there, immanent, struggling, and destined yet to transform the whole."

In emotionalism as such my friend finds no necessary aid to religion. Not how we feel, but to what line of conduct do our feelings lead. Love is not love unless it contains the impulse of renewed life. It must purify itself by action. "If thou lovest me, feed my lambs." There is no other evidence. There is no other way in which emotion can impinge on religion. "Sensations," says my friend, "are within the reach of all." Preachers deal with them sometimes. Our rituals and our choirs give them. There are books that pile up great waves of emotion in us, almost as real as if we had earned them. I have read of battles so vividly portrayed that my cold blood grew hot and I felt like a hero. I cooled down, a little more weary than before; that was all. I have listened to great preachers who talked so familiarly of holy things and made them so real that earth has seemed dreary when I touched it again. Emotions are dangerous things unless they find an outlet in action. We can so narcotize ourselves with holy things that our senses will lie to us. We can meditate on holy things until we feel that



we are holy too. But periods of rude awakening come. We find we have been hearing and not doing; saying Lord! Lord! and not doing God's will.

"Exercise the angel; never wait to exorcise the devil. No animal lives for itself, nor is allowed to live for itself. Nature executes drones. Until a man has learned to give and to train himself for giving, to work for others, to plan and study for others, to live for others, and spend himself for others, and save nothing for himself, nature exacts pound after pound of flesh until only enough remains to make a fossil. Men groan over a tenth. The God of nature exacts all. Our nature exacts all. Use it, or lose it. All your learning, achievement, discovery, your good times, your blessed experiences, have not found the reason for their existence until you touch the heart of humanity. Our hands may lose all we give — our hearts lose nothing."

My friend once told to his students this parable of "The Holy Shadow." Whether original with him or not his notes do not tell us:

"Long, long ago there lived a saint so good that the astonished angels came down from heaven to see how a mortal could be so godly."

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He simply went about his daily life, diffusing virtue as the star diffuses light and the flower perfume, without even being aware of it. Two words summed up his day: he gave, he forgave. Yet these words never fell from his lips; they were expressed in his ready smile, in his kindness, forbearance. and charity.

"The angels said to God, 'O Lord, grant him the gift of miracles!' God replied, 'I consent; ask him what he wishes.'

"So they said to the saint: 'Should you like the touch of your hands to heal the sick?' 'No,' answered the saint; 'I would rather God should do that.' 'Should you like to convert guilty souls and bring back wandering hearts to the right path?' 'No; that is the mission of angels. I pray; I do not convert.' 'Should you like to become a model of patience, attracting men by the lustre of your virtues and thus glorifying God?' 'No,' replied the saint; 'if men should be attached to me, they would become estranged from God. The Lord has other means of glorifying himself.' 'What do you desire then?' cried the angels. 'What can I wish for?' asked the saint, smiling. 'That God gives me his grace; with that shall I not have everything?'

"But the angels insisted: 'You must ask



for a miracle, or one will be forced upon you.' 'Very well,' said the saint; 'that I may do a great deal of good without ever knowing it!'

"The angels were greatly perplexed. They took council together and resolved upon this plan. Every time the saint's shadow should fall behind him or at either side, so that he could not see it, it should have the power to cure disease, soothe pain, and comfort sorrow.

"And so it came to pass, when the saint walked along, his shadow, thrown on the ground on either side or behind him, made arid paths green, caused withered plants to bloom, gave clear water to dried-up brooks, fresh color to pale little children, and joy to unhappy mothers.

"But the saint simply went about his daily life, diffusing virtue as the star diffuses light and the flower perfume, without even being aware of it. And the people, respecting his humility, followed him silently, never speaking to him about his miracles. Little by little, they even came to forget his name, and called him only 'The Holy Shadow.'"

"The word of God is life," says Oscar Carleton McCulloch, a kindred spirit who has in like fashion interpreted the religion of action. "The word of God is life. 'I am



come that they might have life,' says Jesus, 'and that they might have it more abundantly.' Life, not salvation. Salvation is a word that Jesus never used. I am come that men may live, may enjoy their life, may find out what powers are in their hearts and what faculties in their minds, what relation they sustain to the great power above, our Father; what is their business here, how they may help the broken, and how they may lift the fallen. 'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.' God is not here repairing and restoring things alone. Preventive medicine is rapidly displacing remedial medicine. Where of old seventy-two different elements entered into that which was to give life to those that were sick, preventive medicine anticipates the need and to-day asks, How shall we prevent loss of life and keep men and women from being ill?

"I take it that the work of law in this world is not simply disentangling the confusions of men, not simply winning a case for this man and punishing that man; but it is the endeavor to institute justice between man and man, to so state the principles of social order that men shall not quarrel and men shall not err. I understand the work of government is no



longer simply to protect a man while he pushes his plane or swings his scythe or stands behind his counter, but to see to it that all shall have the privileges of each; to see to it that the weakest has not only justice, but opportunity. Preventive government is to take the place of the old protective government. I understand the great work of reform to-day is not simply to relieve those that are hungry, is not simply to confine those that have done wrong, but to heal, to help, to place a man on his feet again, to anticipate the falling of little children, and long before they are neglected to have gathered them into some home and pressed them to some mother's or father's bosom, that love may so protect them and may so prevent their knowledge of evil that they shall not go wrong.

"I understand God's business in this world is not salvation alone; that is a little part of it. It is not restoration alone; that is but a phase of it. It is not repair; that is a small portion of it. But it is utilizing all the forces that are as yet unlimited and unexhausted, that children shall be born to happy homes and joyful parents; shall be so surrounded by education and by the conditions of a happier and purer society that they shall not go astray, that they



shall not fall into evil, that they shall have no taint of sin upon them. There shall be no need of their being born twice, since God's first birth is good enough for all and suffices for all, if nothing comes to prevent the perfect development of his plan.

"This is God's business in the world. This is that on which he works night and day. We sleep, but the forces of nature never sleep. We dream, but there is no dreaming in the restless, quiet energy of God. We make spasmodic effort and put forth feverish power, but all that God works 'is effortless and calm. High on his throne above, in loftiest ray serene, there, though we know not how, he works his quiet will.' 'All great work,' says Ruskin, 'is easily done.' One cannot conceive the immense mind of Shakespeare ever stopping to ask what he shall say next. He moves, the most gigantic of human minds, over the world, interpreting the little meanness of Christopher Sly, penetrating the mind of Iago, entering the sublime sorrow of Lear, and understanding the immense power of Othello.

"Here is the conception of the universe as God's place of business, with organism and system and science; employment of power and engagement and adaptation of the littlest



things to the largest issues. This is the work in which we have our part and place. Each of us fits in somewhere; to us the question of place and use is the supreme question. Why are you troubled, says Jesus, about questions of food and clothing and shelter; your Heavenly Father knows all about these things and has provided for them: for you the supreme question of life is, Where is my place and what is my work? Seek ye first place and use and all things will be added."

That is a noble sentence of the litany, "Whose service is perfect freedom." This is perhaps the finest test of religion. To do the one thing best worth doing from day to day is to make constantly better things possible. It is to make us daily more and more free. It is wrong-doing which ties up a man, doing each day the second best, the third best, the worst possible thing for him to do. The man who refuses to tie himself up to small things is always ready for large ones. It is truth which makes free. It is righteousness that enlarges our borders, that widens our coasts.

As to this, I heard my friend tell this story—a part of his experience as a naturalist in Mexico:

"I stood one sunny day on a coral reef in the harbor of Vera Cruz. The hazy blue air was full of sunshine and the healthy odors of the sea. Birds were tumbling about overhead in the perfect abandon of strength and room and tropical comfort. The white rocks and blue sea were mixing in a line of fleecy foam until the coral seemed to flow away on the wave crests. It was a perfect day, such as God sends us often when he lets heaven down to rest on earth for a little while. At my feet was a square hole cut out of the rock. Across it were bars of iron. I put my face down, and when my eyes became accustomed to the darkness below, I could see human forms there, men in chains, standing in water ankle deep, with the ocean ceaselessly pounding overhead, its hoarse laugh reminding them that they would be thrown to the sharks when they were dead. I could see their haggard faces turned up toward the little barred square of light, which was all of the great free outside world they could see. Since that day that Mexican prison has been the background against which I have set my ideal of freedom. Chained hand and foot, enclosed by rocky walls, dependent upon their masters for food and drink and air and life, these men were slaves.

“And yet not all slaves are in chains or behind prison bars. Standing beside me in the group that looked into that dismal hole was a young American. He seemed free. He could go where he pleased. He could gratify his appetites and desires. He was on his way to his Northern home, to wed a pure-hearted girl who was waiting for him there. He read me from one of her letters, and one could see that he was her ideal of manhood. Yet the night before he spent in a Vera Cruz brothel. The purity he was taking home to his betrothed was only acted. His manhood was only on the surface. The truth was not in him. He was afraid lest he should seem to be what he was. He was chained by his sins and imprisoned by the wall of falsehood he had built around himself until he walked the paths of truth only in great fear lest the rattle of his secret chains would reveal his captivity.

“A man is not always free when he seems to do as he pleases. It depends on what he pleases to do. Nor are outward chains the only badge of slavery. It is true that wherever Jesus has gone emancipation has followed. ‘Imperialism has given way to democracy, and slavery to free labor.’ Peter slept in



prison, and an angel came and set him free ; but this is not the way the freemen of Jesus are liberated. No angel touches the sleeping prisoner that the chains may drop from his galled wrists, but a divine strength has been imparted to the bondman until, like Samson, he has risen from his slumber and shaken himself, and his withes have parted like tow in the flames. The reformation of Jesus has been peculiar in this : it has reformed men by making them strong enough to reform themselves. The angel came in the night and touched Peter, and his chains fell off and he was free. This is the old way of liberating. The spirit of Christ Jesus in Paul made him victor over his own baser nature and set him free from the despotism of his own folly and the mastership of the Evil One. That is Jesus' way. His reformation is from the inside out. Man becomes a partner in the process."

And therefore the sensible American is persuaded that the religion of Jesus is an adequate religion, that never in the history of the world was it more alive or more potent, and that every movement of civilization, from the study of the lilies, the care for little children, the healing of the sick, and the casting out of devils from church and from state has been



along lines laid down by him, by the devotion of men for those things for which he cared.

With all this what shall we say of immortality? The idea of eternal life as well as that of life unblemished is in the teachings of Jesus. It is everywhere taken for granted. Our friend does not ask for immortality as a debt due him from the Creator. In this good world he has had his rewards and punishments, each sufficient for the day thereof. He asks no final compensation for dreary and dispiriting service. He has known no such service. His "times are in God's hands," the same God that "each day instantly and constantly reneweth the work of creation." He is sure of personal immortality if in the economy of the universe that phase of eternal life for him be worth while. If immortality is not inevitable, it is no part of his religion to crave it or to demand it. He realizes the futility of an appeal to Science. Science can have no answer to this question. Science is human experience tested and set in order. We who are mortal have had no experience of immortality to which any of our mechanical tests can apply. I find in my friend's notes no mention of the finally impenitent, no speculation as to the abode of the wicked, no balancing of



rewards and punishments. To be busy with the Father's work, be the time long or short, that is reward enough; and whether the way has been smooth or rough, that is a minor question. The more severe the test, the greater the strength which has hammered out victory. As for punishment, failure carries its own. To be nothing, to have done nothing, to be at one with no force in the universe, to have helped no one, to have loved no one, all this is the penalty of nonentity, and it needs no added horrors.

To my friend ease is akin to selfishness. Rest is well for him who has earned it, but only as a prelude to more activity. He found little to interest him in the remedies for nervous exhaustion which consist in enforced belief that all things are alike unreal, and that because nothing is real, disease, deformation, and sin are alike non-existent. The essential selfishness of the serenity cultivated in this fashion always impressed him. What we need for effective life is more faith in our environment, not less. More faith in reality of matter and force and more faith in the power of the human soul to stand above it. We need not belittle the power of the strong god Circumstance, but the God we worship is a stronger



god. So long as "I and my Father are one," so long do I stand in a majority with the Universe.

So my friend found in robust action in helping others the remedy for exhaustion of spirit. Futile emotion, idle aspiration, "rose pink sentimentalism which never was and never can be woven into action," these had no part in his religious philosophy. Alive, awake, ready to act and ready to help, this was his measure of a man. To the weak and poor, the broken and the feeble, action must show its gentle side; but my friend had no sympathy with a final gospel of feebleness. The distemper of anæmia he would never accept as religion.

"Whether," says Robert Louis Stevenson, "we look justly for years of health and vigor, or are about to mount a bath chair as a step toward a hearse, there is but one conclusion possible, that a man should stop his ears against paralyzing terror and run the race that is before him with a single mind."

This word is from Oscar McCulloch :

"I tell you, when a man comes to God at last, having stood, God must look upon him very much as we look upon the soldiers that came back from the war, dusty, ragged, worn, sunburned, and limping along; but they had



stood. That war seemed such a little thing in 1861, when the call was made and so many thousands leaped forward to say, 'Yes; we will go,' and shouted 'On to Richmond,' and it was thought to be only a week's hurried work. But the weeks rolled out into years and years, and the obstructions came; there were doubts and uncertainties of principle as well as of issue; there was failure and defeat. All that, but still they stood. 'Having done all, stand.' We have to do it in life. Who knows the way through life from beginning to end? If such there be, some fortunate one, I cannot say that I envy him, but I know I wonder at him. God's conquerors have not come out of this life with burnished armor and floating plume. No; with dented armor and broken helm and bruised body they have come. They have not heard the playing of trumpets and seen the floating of welcoming banners. Many of them have had to die in the dark, saying: 'My God, why hast thou forsaken me?'

"I have lived through these things. That is why I can talk about them. There is not a footstep here that I have not pressed with my own foot, and I dare say that many who are here can say the same thing. Let us under-



stand it and take it as it is. With what we believe to be the universe on our side, then barrenness of nature, unloveliness of suggestion, bitter oppositions of men, and the clouding and uncertainty of the issue, count for but little.

“Let us stand in righteousness and truth and peace with other men. As is our hope, so is our belief that there is a God on whose side we work and who has ability to help us; we believe there is an expansion as well as an extension of life beyond. How proudly shall they come in at the last who have fought the good fight and have finished their course and have kept their faith. Oh, he leads them by ways that they have not known.”

The arguments of philosophy can have for us no finality. We have only the certainty of man's experience, from which no reasoning may expand. The only philosophy which can be trusted has its roots in science. We know no truth save that which arises from human experience, and this truth is, at best, seen only in part as “through a glass darkly.” The outlines in this “dimly lighted room” of human consciousness philosophy endeavors to restore. She would see the phenomena about us, not with the partial and subjective vision of man,



but as with the eye of the Infinite Being. She would know things as they really are, but she cannot, because only through our imperfect senses, the basis of science, can we know objective things at all. Outside the field of knowledge and of reason, outside of science and of philosophy, lies the belief in immortality. "Life, like a dome of many-colored glass," says Shelley, "stains the white radiance of eternity."

Let us listen to our friend as he gives us the basis of his belief. "No fact is actually *known* unless it is stated in mathematical terms, and with questions such as this no demonstration is possible. Attempts to demonstrate degrade the truth. Before you can prove it, you must first bring it down out of the region where things require no proof to the level of common things that can be proved. You may *know* a stone or a bit of metal; you will never weigh love.

"Immortality is not proved by Nature. Nature is full of suggestions and analogies, but analogies prove nothing. Homologies prove. If we can trace a fundamental identity between any element of our character and the nature of God, if we can find in the beneficent heart of God a homology to the



heart of man, we have commenced to build the demonstration of the fact of immortality.

“So if I appear to destroy the heaven of your dreams, let me try to show you that in its place may be put a heaven which knows no present or future.

“If man is ever to be an immortal being, he is such when he begins to live his divinity. If you have risen to that height where you feel sure that you know God in this world and in your life and in the lives of your fellows, be very sure that you know your own immortality.

“How did Jesus view this question? He offers no proof of immortality, but simply assumes it. He talks much about love, faith, obedience, prayer. He might have shown that each presupposes immortality, but he did not. Life was so real to him that the thought of its ending never occurred to him. He was alive, and that meant alive forever. Death was only an incident connected with man’s body, and to Jesus man was not a body, but a soul—using matter for a while, but not identified with it.

“If his life had been to any extent identified with matter, we might have expected him to fear death; for we know perfectly that death



will separate us from material things. But he loved things in men that death could not touch; and he lived and worked with characters, not bodies. So he wasted no time in reasoning about things that are not to be settled by reason. He assumed God, and God is. To demonstrate immortality would have been to him irrelevant. He was alive, forever, self-evident. He assumed it and built his whole teaching on that assumption.

“Do you say that assumption is no proof? It is a statement of conviction. The biologist is convinced that there is such a thing as life; he assumes it, and works upon that assumption. So Jesus assumes that man is *un*-mortal. He does not speak of life hereafter; life is now — now and forever. Life and eternal life are the same. The important thing with him was not that man might through much suffering and trial weather the storms of life and then have an easy course through all eternity. The vital point with him was that man should not postpone his life until after his own funeral, but should begin his eternity now.

“So he sought to give meaning to life. Not knowledge, nor power, nor riches, nor position, but character. And then life begins to be true; it announces itself as eternal to the



mind. When a man begins to live—love, deny himself, serve—he understands what life is and knows that death cannot touch it. But all these activities are what may be called spiritual activities. When the spiritual nature is brought into exercise, it generates not only faith in eternal life, but reasons for it.

“In proportion as man’s life is identified with things that change and decay is his faith weakened. But if one’s ideals are in the realm of character, death is not one of their attributes. Faith has a wonderful assimilating power; we are like what we believe. By this principle Jesus unites himself to men. Fellowship brings likeness, and likeness means that we take ourselves his attitude toward life. What was his attitude? Love. To the lawyer who tempted him, Jesus answered, ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. This do, and thou shalt live.’ This is another way of saying that life is love, and love is life eternal. Only he who loves lives. Wisdom is vain unless our knowledge is turned into love.

“Love for men—and this soon passes into love for God—lifts man above the physical,



where death is, into the spiritual life everlasting."

We may, then, strive toward a religion which shall be not collective alone, but personal; not the religion of a time or state, but of a man; not one of creed nor of ceremony nor of emotion, not primarily a religion of the intellect, but a religion of faith and cheer, of love and action, of trust in the realities of nature and in the reality of the spirit, a faith that the universe is in hands of perfect wisdom and that in our way we may be at one with it, striving toward abounding life and helping our brother organisms as we meet them to struggle toward all good things.

Dr. McCulloch quotes from a Persian philosopher: "Divinities of worship had divided mankind into seventy-two religions; from all their dogmas I select one—divine love." And the test of love is its impulse to action. "Cheerful and hopeful to do life's business." If this defines our religion, its truth will be shown in our works.

My friend ended an address to his students with these words:

"Ye men of Stanford, I perceive that in all things you are somewhat religious. But you



have reasoned about God's power and have studied his laws until you have ceased to feel your likeness to him, and have written over your altar the inscription, 'To the unknown God.' And the altar bears no sacrifice. What, therefore, ye worship as agnostics, declare I unto you, the God that made the world and all things therein, he being Lord of heaven and earth, giveth to all life and breath and all good things, and is not far from each one of us. For in him we live and move and have our being. When man loves and serves, it is the child endeavoring to be like its father. When man longs for greater, nobler, truer things, it is the son recognizing his relation to the Parent.

"Out of your lives take the love and sympathy, the purity, the truth, the tender things, and all that grows into larger life, and put these on the cold altar of your heart; then cut out those empty, lonely words, 'To an unknown God,' and write 'Our Father.' And bow before him; for this is your God, and he will not withhold any good thing from you if you walk uprightly."

Of the many tributes to my friend's memory, the Phi Beta Kappa poem, by one of his students, is the most worthy. It is entitled

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PRAYER

BY CHARLES KELLOGG FIELD

*"Ab well-a-day, what evil looks  
Had I from old and young;  
Instead of the Cross the Albatross  
About my neck was hung; . . .  
I looked to Heaven and tried to pray,  
But or ever a prayer gusht,  
A wicked whisper came and made  
My heart as dry as dust."*

I

There is a season of high-hearted song,  
The vocal glory of the greening spring,  
When life stirs up through music, pulsing strong  
Toward the hushed wonder of its blossoming;  
No meditation softens this clear tone  
That rings with newly-wakened consciousness,  
The tingling upward impulse asks alone  
Expression, and the song is purposeless  
Save that perhaps some thrill of mystery  
Lies at the roots of life, an unguessed hour  
Felt in the lifting leaves, a prophecy  
Locked in the promise of the folded flower.  
As yet along the stalks the tender green  
That the fond roots first ushered to the light  
Remains, although an urgency unseen  
Compels division to release the slight  
Brave colors of the buds that must have way;  
And where the new leaves spread old leaves appear,  
Caught in the stalks' uprising where they lay, —  
Dead straws that linger from the parent year.



Over the hills the free winds blow,  
The lithe stalks bend and the old leaves go,  
And the young plants shiver a little as though  
They miss the touch they are wont to know,  
And a sense, somehow, of loss and wrong  
Bears heavily at the heart of song.

II

Who knows the number (I remember one)  
To whose glad youth the Campus has upheld  
Spring's green-and-silver mirror in the sun,  
How many musings it has paralleled  
When thought intruded on the wordless joy  
The field-lark set to music; I have known  
How in new leaves and wind-swept straws a boy  
May see reflected his dear faith outgrown.  
For who shall measure what minutest change  
Can stiffen stem and bud or harden thought  
From tender trust to question, and estrange  
Old leaf and new, home and the youth it taught?  
Chance breeze, chance word,—what grows that may  
escape it?  
Light breeze or wind, light word or argument,  
Men's faith is as environment shall shape it,  
Trees are but twigs continuously bent.  
Thus it has been that simple faith in prayer,  
Entering these arcades, was blown away  
By "winds of freedom" taken unaware  
In shining weather, and the mind swept bare  
Of confidence and any will to pray.  
So many hands there are to rend  
The masonry of faith apart!



Books unexplored, some rare new friend  
Whose trust already has had end.

Who cannot find it in his heart  
To beg of what he cannot see,  
To dare inform Infinity ;  
So many hands destructive, and so few  
To rear upon the ruined heap a new  
Abiding comfort ! All too long remain  
The fragments, never wholly set again ;  
The winds of doubting blow the dust  
Of the old comfortable trust  
Whereto there stretches no return  
Save only as the mind may learn  
Some satisfaction to discern.

## III

To such a mind a voice may reach,  
In class-time or some graver day,  
Whose calm authority of speech  
Shall fill an eager ear and teach  
A troubled spirit how to pray ;  
A voice like one, — this much we know :  
It sank in silence years ago  
When he was put from sight and sound  
Beneath the Arboretum ground,  
Where sweeps, as in a long caress,  
The pepper-branches' tenderness, —  
So much we know, howe'er we guess !  
Voice unforgotten ! once your message came,  
Set in a quiet sentence ; others heard  
Doubtless no more than word trail after word  
Along the dry course of the droning hour,  
As in a drowsy shower

Drop follows drop along the window-frame ;  
 Yet one heart there was stirred  
 As by its name  
     Called suddenly at night, a flame  
     Leaped up with power  
 Upon the instant to illumine  
 Its path's impenetrable gloom.  
 Your words were like the ocean's utterance,  
     Whose deep, illimitable swell  
 Has waked a haunting assonance  
     Within the hollow of a shell,  
         An echo yearning to set free  
         Its understanding of the sea,  
         And able only to impart  
         A hint of what is in its heart.

IV

"Prayer, if it be such deep desire  
     For good that it shall realize  
 Its hope in action, may aspire  
     To answer and not otherwise."  
 So spake the voice, and prayer became  
 A force, no more an emptied name !  
 And over faith's inverted cup  
 A gleaming Grail was lifted up.  
 No mere petition could express  
 That inward prayer for righteousness,  
 Nor any supplicating word  
 Voice the diviner speech unheard ;  
 For life itself was made the only prayer  
     And life itself the only answer gained ;  
 Unlimited the soul's expression there,  
     Unlimited the heart's desire attained !

The eager stem shall find its hour  
Of answer in the opened flower,  
And the flower's rapt unfolding lead  
To rich fulfilment in the seed ;  
Man's self-dependent will to be  
In tune with God's high harmony,  
Right thinking ever turned to act  
Shall make unceasing prayer a fact,  
And prayer, thus answered, shall allow  
A larger faith and teach it how  
To find its heaven here and now !

*"That selfsame moment I could pray  
And from my neck so free  
The Albatross fell off and sank  
Like lead into the sea."*











